

# CHAPTER FOUR: ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

## INTRODUCTION

Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) is a partnership between the United States and the State of California. Tijuana River NERR links together National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR). In addition, several regional agencies and local municipalities share ownership and management responsibilities at the Reserve.

The Reserve Management Authority is the multi-agency body that coordinates policy and operations on a Reserve-wide basis. Through voluntary participation in the Management Authority, member agencies consent to establish Reserve-wide policies, jointly promote Reserve programs, and cooperate to provide funding and staff to accomplish the missions of the Reserve and the constituent land systems.

The roles and responsibilities for the Management Authority, the operating agencies, and affiliate organizations are defined in this chapter. This chapter also provides an action plan through which the Reserve can improve its administrative framework to better serve the public.

## I. MISSION

The mission of the administrative framework plan at the Reserve is to:

**Provide administrative relationships and staff necessary to fulfill the Reserve's mission and goals as established in the administrative rules and interagency agreements.**

## II. GOALS

Goal 1. Maintain an administrative framework that maximizes interagency cooperation and allows the Reserve to take full advantage of funding opportunities.

Goal 2. Establish and maintain an effective administrative structure that provides clear policy direction and guidance in the management of the Reserve.

**Goal 3: Coordinate and cooperate with federal, state, and local partners to manage a seamless Reserve that addresses watershed and ecosystem-level concerns while meeting the established purpose of the National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (Refuge Goal).**

### **III. POLICIES**

#### **A. RELATIONSHIP TO FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT**

##### **1. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System**

Each National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) is jointly operated by a state and the federal government. The federal interest is represented by NOAA's Sanctuaries and Reserves Division (SRD). NOAA's mission includes management of the nation's coastal resources and promotion of global stewardship of the world's oceans and atmosphere through science and service. SRD coordinates the NERR System nationally and administers NOAA grant funds to state partners at individual Reserves.

The NERR System is intended to operate as a federal/state partnership. Although the management of a reserve, including development of site-specific policies, is a state's responsibility, NOAA provides overall system policies and guidelines, funding, and program assistance. In addition, NOAA evaluates the reserves every three years. The purpose of the NOAA review is to ensure that a state is complying with NOAA/NERR goals, approved work plans, and reserve management plans.

Pursuant to Coastal Zone Management ACT (CZMA) enabling legislation (Sections 312 and 315), NOAA must conduct performance evaluations of the operation and management of each reserve while NOAA's federal financial assistance continues. If deficiencies in the operation or types of research conducted at a reserve are found, NOAA may withdraw financial assistance to the reserve until remedies are in place. National Estuarine Research Reserve designation can be withdrawn by NOAA when a reserve is found to be deficient and fails to correct deficiencies within a reasonable time.

The state interest is usually represented through one or more state agencies or universities. Typically these are agencies charged with environmental, wildlife or coastal management responsibilities. States usually administer Reserve personnel and day-to-day Reserve management.

##### **2. The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration**

The Reserve is an atypical NERR because FWS is an additional federal partner. NOAA provides no funding for or oversight over NWR management. On the NWR portion of the Reserve, FWS, not the state, has primary authority. At the Reserve, FWS and CDPR have agreed to cooperate in joint day-to-day Reserve management.

Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), administered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Refuge System includes habitats in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Since establishment of the first NWR in 1903, the NWRS has grown to include over 512 units, totaling over 92 million acres. The Refuge System is the only federal lands system dedicated to wildlife conservation and is the most diverse and complete collection of habitats managed by any resource agency in the world.

Tijuana Slough NWR is administered by FWS Region 1, headquartered in Portland, Oregon. Tijuana Slough NWR is one of four NWRs of the San Diego NWR Complex, headquartered in Carlsbad, CA. The project leader for the San Diego Complex administers all NWRS units in the county, and represents FWS on the Management Authority. Budget and personnel ceilings for the Tijuana Slough are included in Complex allocations. The on-site manager oversees day-to-day operations at Tijuana Slough, including coordinating the Operating Agency partnership with CDPR, directing and supervising assigned staff, and planning and executing all Refuge programs at the Reserve.

### **3. California Department of State Parks Administration**

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is the federally designated administrative lead agency at Tijuana River NERR. As the designated state agency in the NERR partnership, the state matches NOAA's financial contribution, primarily by providing staffing for the Reserve. As one of the major landowners within the Reserve, CDPR also manages Border Field State Park as part of the overall state parks system.

## **IV. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND PERCEIVED NEEDS**

### **A. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK**

the Reserve is unique among the 21 units of the NERR System in its composition and management. Unlike most NERRs that are managed by a single state agency with state and NOAA funding, the Reserve is an aggregation of local, state, and federal lands subject to "hands-on" management by each land-owning agency.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) is the NERR-designated state agency that, with NOAA support, contributes significantly to the Reserve. Fish and Wildlife Service contributes additional significant federal resources. Additional state resources are provided by the California Coastal Conservancy and the California Coastal Commission. Local governments, including the County of San Diego, the City of San Diego, and the City of Imperial Beach, each contribute to the Reserve program and coordinate policy with Reserve staff.

Like most NERRs, the Reserve's activities are reviewed by a Management Authority comprised of representatives of the cooperating agencies and organizations, landowners, and non-owners. The Management Authority coordinates and unifies Reserve programs.

Within the Reserve, CDPR owns and administers Border Field State Park. The Superintendent of Border Field State Park also serves as Reserve manager and is responsible for administering NOAA funding and programs at the Reserve.

Fish and Wildlife Service administers Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge, including fee lands of the FWS and U.S. Navy, and adjacent state tidelands under a lease from the California State Lands Commission.

The City of San Diego and County of San Diego also own and administer land within the Reserve. County lands are part of the San Diego County Parks System. City lands are currently operated and maintained by the County Park System under a City/County Memorandum of Understanding.

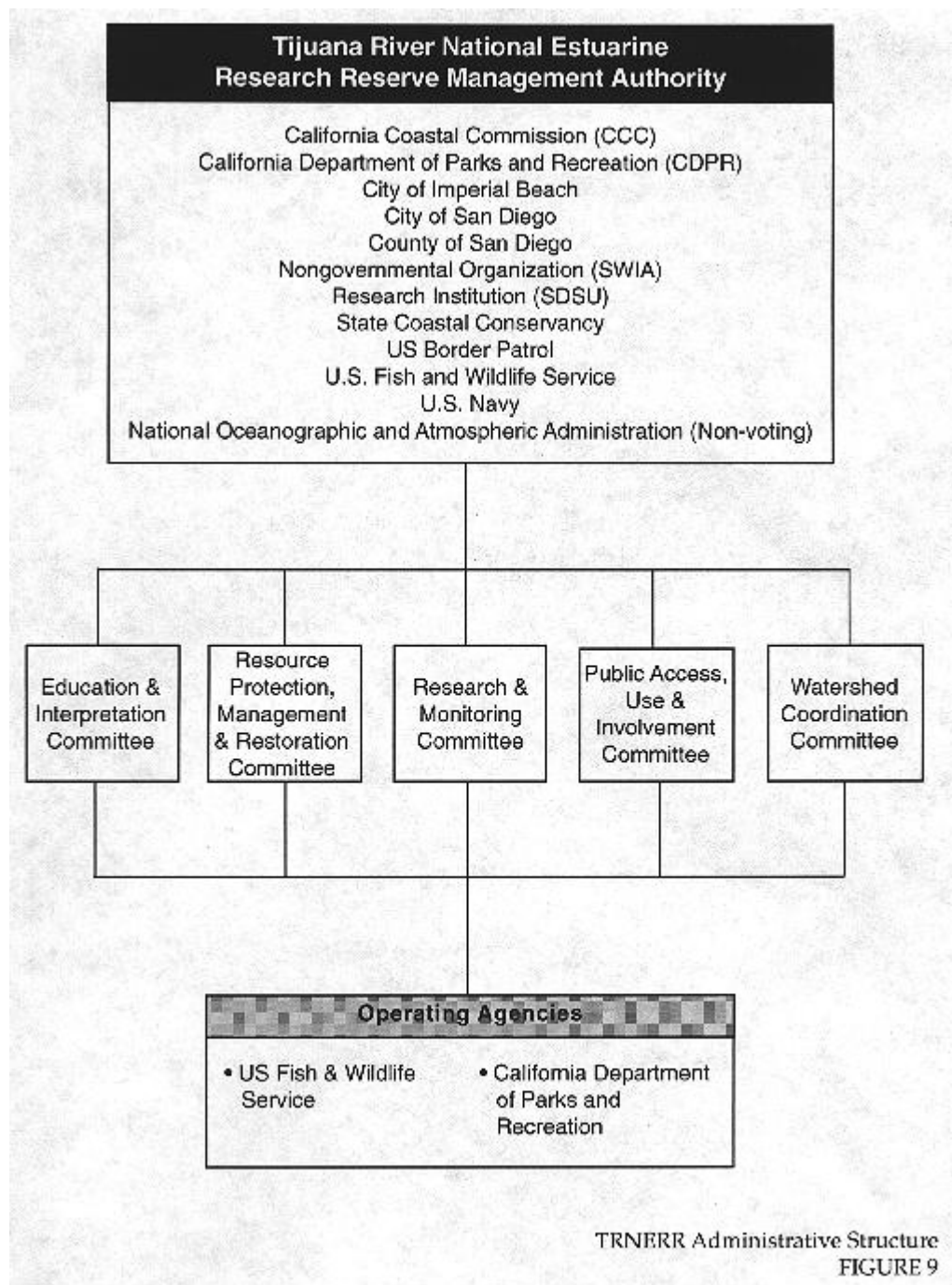
The management structure of the Reserve is shown in Figure 9.

## **B. OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES BY AGENCY CATEGORY**

### **1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Management Authority**

The Management Authority member agencies have joined together to coordinate policy, enhance communication, leverage resources, and achieve mutual Reserve-wide missions and goals. The responsibilities of the Reserve's Management Authority are:

- to coordinate activities of the various constituent agencies;
- to provide Reserve-wide policy guidance;



- to oversee progress toward achieving NERR System requirements and Reserve goals; and
- to provide a forum for discussing complex issues and addressing conflict.

The Management Authority meets quarterly, or as needed, to conduct Reserve business and obtain public input. In the rare situation where an agreement cannot be reached through the Management Authority voting process, each agency retains the responsibility and authority to carry out its primary objectives on the property it owns or manages. Any activities carried out in the Reserve must, however, be consistent with this plan.

#### a. Composition of the Management Authority

The Management Authority consists of nine permanent members and two term member appointments, described below. Once appointed, permanent and term members have equal status. Additional seats, permanent or term, may be created by the Management Authority.

##### i. Permanent Members

Permanent members of the Management Authority are appointed representatives of the major public land-owning agencies, the cities, and county where the Reserve is located, and state agencies with primary missions to protect coastal resources.

The nine permanent positions on the Management Authority are held by representatives from each of the following agencies:

California Coastal Commission  
 California Department of Parks and Recreation  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 State Coastal Conservancy  
 U.S. Navy  
 City of Imperial Beach  
 City of San Diego  
 County of San Diego  
 U.S. Border Patrol

In addition, NOAA holds a permanent, non-voting seat on the Management Authority.

##### ii. Term Appointments

There are two “term” positions held by organizations that promote the mission of the Reserve. One position is to be held by a representative of a local university or research facility. A second position is to be held by a representative of non-governmental organization with 501(c)(3) status and a stated mission that supports the Reserve. Terms last two years; there is no limit to the number of terms for each organization. The nine permanent members of the Management Authority are responsible for appointing the two term positions. The Management Authority may offer term membership to universities or non-profit organizations based on the following criteria:

- an expressed interest in participating in the Management Authority,
- a demonstrated commitment to the long term mission of the Reserve, and
- an assessment that the organization would provide a partnership that is beneficial to multiple Reserve programs.

Upon ratification of the updated Management Plan, two-year term memberships will be offered to San Diego State University (SDSU, a research institution) and Southwest Wetland Interpretive Association (SWIA, a non-governmental organization).

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities of Management Authority Committees**

Five standing committees advise the Management Authority in the conduct of its business:

- Resource Protection, Management, and Restoration Committee: responsible for Reserve-wide biological and cultural resource management programs, law enforcement, habitat management, restoration, and enhancement.
- Research and Monitoring Committee: responsible for coordinating research and scientific monitoring at the Reserve.
- Education and Interpretation Committee: responsible for environmental education and outreach activities of the Reserve.
- Public Access, Use, and Involvement Committee: responsible for recreation programs, law enforcement, signage and publications, and public affairs.
- Watershed Coordination Committee: responsible for cross-border programs with partners in Mexico and all binational issues impacting the Reserve, its resources, and its programs.

These committees assist the Management Authority in accomplishing the goals of this Plan. Committees consist of the Reserve staff and interested community members. Each committee must have at least one member of the Management Authority, who is designated as the committee chair. Committees are charged with considering issues referred by the Management Authority, developing options, proposing strategies, and making recommendations to the Management Authority. An important function of the committees is to involve the public directly in the decision-making process at the Reserve. Committee chairs accept assignments from the Management Authority and convene committee meetings on a regular basis. The committees may provide reports and recommended actions to the Management Authority for their approval. Reports and recommended actions are to be provided to the Management Authority in writing prior to the Management Authority meeting.

Ad hoc committees are formed on an as-needed basis to address specific issues outside the existing committee format. Ad hoc committees have been formed on the issues of trails, law enforcement, and visitor center exhibits.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Operating Agencies**

Day-to-day management of Reserve programs, including resource protection, land management, and all public-use programs, is a joint responsibility of the operating agencies (CDPR and FWS). The operating agencies have agreed, through a "Letter of Agreement" (Appendix 6) to operate a "seamless" Reserve and to conduct their operations in a coordinated manner. Both operating agencies are equally committed and responsible for all Reserve programs. This is a major change from the 1986 Management Plan framework, in which FWS was the lead agency for wildlife resource/biological programs, and CDPR was lead agency for all other programs.

The one exception to shared responsibilities for Reserve Management is the relationship with NOAA, including administration of NOAA resources supporting the Reserve. By law, the Reserve manager is a state employee. At the Reserve, the state park superintendent serves as Reserve manager. The Reserve manager is the public voice for NERR System programs and is responsible for meeting NOAA reporting requirements, administering NOAA grants, and reporting on NOAA funding and reviews to the Management Authority.

The Reserve manager and on-site Refuge manager comprise the Reserve management team. They are charged by their respective agencies and the Management Authority with closely coordinating all Reserve programs and ensuring that the operating



agencies' efforts and leveraged resources are cooperative and directed at achieving the Reserve mission. While each agency administers its lands in accordance with agency policy, decisions on day-to-day program operations are reached jointly by the on-site managers of the operating agencies to the maximum extent possible.

Development, operations, and maintenance of Reserve facilities are the responsibility of the operating agencies. The operating agencies recommend Reserve-wide proposals to the Management Authority. The Management Authority will provide advice and act to advance the Reserve mission.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities of the Cooperating Agencies**

Cooperating Agencies sit on the Management Authority but are not involved in the daily operation of the Reserve. They are as follows:

##### **a. Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM)**

OCRM is the NOAA division responsible for implementing the NERR System in partnership with state and local governments, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities.

The NERR System is administered by the Sanctuary and Reserves Division (SRD) of OCRM within NOAA. This division is authorized under the Coastal Zone Management Act to make matching grants to states for acquisition, development, and operation of NERRs (not NWRs). As part of this authority, the SRD is responsible for ensuring that each reserve is managed according to the NERR Regulations (15 CFR 921) and individual grant awards.

##### **b. State Coastal Conservancy**

The State Coastal Conservancy is responsible for coordinating Reserve land acquisition and resource restoration programs outlined in the Management Plan. The Conservancy carries out its work in close coordination with each land-owning agency and the Management Authority. The Conservancy's emphasis is to facilitate planning across jurisdictional boundaries, both within the Reserve and adjacent areas of the watershed. Work includes the analysis and planning necessary to support restoration and acquisition activities, identifying and securing funds needed for implementation and management of projects.

##### **c. California Coastal Commission (CCC)**

The CCC is responsible for reviewing coastal development permits within areas of the coastal zone not covered by a local government's Local Coastal Program (LCP); monitoring the implementation of local government LCPs; enforcing violations of the California Coastal Act; and reviewing certain federal activities, federally funded, or federally permitted projects for consistency with the State's approved coastal management program. The CCC also maintains a land-use planning role and works with local jurisdictions in development and amendments to their LCPs.

d. City of San Diego

As the majority of the Reserve and U.S. portions of the Tijuana River Valley are located within the San Diego corporate limits, the City has land use and regulatory responsibilities. The City also has responsibilities for providing local services (police, fire, etc.); the permitting or construction and maintenance of new and existing infrastructure improvements (flood control); and ensuring compliance with federal floodway regulations. In addition, the City is a landowner, holding approximately 285 acres of land within the Reserve boundary. An agreement established in November of 1997 transfers ownership of lands south of the Tijuana River to Border Field State Park. Remaining City-owned parcels near the eastern boundary of the Reserve are managed by the County of San Diego under a 1996 agreement. The City is also involved in the construction of portions of the International Wastewater Treatment Plant, the South Bay Ocean Outfall, water reclamation plant, the replacement of bridges at Dairy Mart Road and Hollister Street, and mitigation associated with all projects currently under design or construction.

e. County of San Diego

The County of San Diego is responsible for land acquisition, restoration, resource protection, management, and environmental education on County Parks lands within the estuary and the Tijuana River Valley. The County provides matching funds and in-kind services, when available, and coordinates with other agencies. County of San Diego representatives also provide consultation and services related to ocean water quality testing, integrated pest management, hazardous materials management, and mosquito and disease prevention.

f. City of Imperial Beach

The City of Imperial Beach owns no land within the Reserve, but has land-use responsibility over portions of the Reserve within its corporate limits. The City is

responsible for any general plan amendments and modification to zoning plan ordinances.

g. U.S. Border Patrol

The United States Border Patrol prevents illegal immigration into the U.S. and is presently the most active agency present in the southern end of the Reserve. As a member of the Management Authority, the Border Patrol is able to coordinate its patrol efforts with the Reserve's resource management program and advise and contribute to resource protection efforts.

h. San Diego State University

The Reserve is an auxiliary field station for San Diego State University. The majority of the research conducted at the Reserve since its designation has been conducted by the university's Pacific Estuarine Research Laboratory. SDSU is nationally recognized for its work in coastal wetland restoration and advises on the Reserve's restoration activities.

i. Southwest Wetland Interpretive Association

Southwest Wetland Interpretive Association (SWIA) is a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) dedicated to preservation, restoration, and education in the Tijuana River Valley and its wetlands. It is member supported and works with federal and state resource agencies dedicated to the protection and enhancement and interpretation of wetlands. SWIA's primary objectives are protection of the Reserve, fundraising, and administration of grants for restoration of damaged wetlands, education and revegetation, and the preservation of threatened resources through land trust acquisitions.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESOURCE PROTECTION

**1. TRNERR Management Authority**

Consistent with the 1995 NERR System strategic plan and the Management Plan, the Management Authority reviews and approves annual and long-term priorities for resource protection and restoration work within the Reserve as well as involvement of the Reserve in the Tijuana River watershed. The Management Authority also develops new programs and funding sources to address new resource protection and restoration

issues as they arise, and provides input to regulatory agencies that review off-Reserve projects within the watershed.

Within the Management Authority, the Resource Protection, Management and Restoration Committee has the primary role of evaluating resource protection proposals and projects and makes recommendations on them to the full Authority.

## **2. The Operating Agencies - CDPR and FWS**

The operating agencies are each responsible for all resource protection and restoration activities that occur within the boundaries of their land units (State Park and National Wildlife Refuge shown in Figure 3). The operating agencies also develop plans for restoration projects and assist in preparation of environmental compliance documents for restoration work.

When possible, the operating agencies provide funding, technical assistance, and personnel to assist in planning, supervision, construction, monitoring, and maintenance of restoration and resource protection projects. The operating agencies also coordinate with the Management Authority on all controversial or sensitive Resource Protection and Restoration activities.

The operating agencies are the primary law enforcement agencies within the Reserve. CDPR and FWS are both responsible for protection of resources within their jurisdictions, and for coordinating and cooperating with each other and with other law enforcement, including San Diego Police, San Diego County Sheriff, California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Border Patrol. A Law Enforcement Memorandum of Agreement is currently being negotiated and will detail the Reserve Enforcement Program.

## **3. The Cooperating Agencies**

### **a. The State Coastal Conservancy**

The State Coastal Conservancy is the primary agency responsible for planning and coordinating execution of Reserve-wide habitat restoration. The Conservancy provides funds and staffing, as available, to plan habitat protection and restoration projects. The Coastal Conservancy also seeks outside sources of funding for Reserve programs and serves as a coordinator for preparation of environmental compliance documents. The Coastal Conservancy serves as a liaison for agencies that regulate Reserve activities.

### b. The California Coastal Commission

The California Coastal Commission is responsible for regulating coastal zone development in areas not covered by certified Local Coastal Program (LCP), and as such must review Reserve projects and provide permits for restoration projects. The Coastal Commission also monitors implementation of local government's LCPs and enforces violations of the Coastal Act.

### c. The County of San Diego

The County is responsible for managing County and City of San Diego-owned lands of the Reserve consistent with county policy and this plan, and coordinates land use and resource protection activities that overlap the Reserve and Tijuana River Valley Regional Park.

## **D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **1. TRNERR Management Authority**

The Management Authority reviews annual priorities for interpretation and education to ensure consistency with NERR Strategic Plan and Three-Year Action Plan goals. The Management Authority also evaluates progress toward achieving NERR and Reserve goals in these program areas and adjusts long-term priorities. The Management Authority's Research and Monitoring, Education, and Interpretation and Public Access, Use, and Involvement committees each have responsibilities to study, review, and recommend changes and improvements to the education and interpretation programs.

### **2. Operating Agencies**

CDPR and FWS are jointly responsible for operational planning and execution of Reserve education and interpretation programs. The Reserve manager/park superintendent and the on-site Refuge manager agree to tailor their staff assignments to best meet program needs with minimal duplication of effort and maximum economy. Specific responsibilities will vary, depending on staffing levels and skills and abilities of staff.

As viewed by the Management Authority and the operating agencies, the Interpretation and Education program arena includes formal environmental education to primary and secondary school students; educational efforts directed at coastal zone regulators and

managers; staff-presented and self-guided interpretive programs; outreach and media relations; and teacher and docent training.

With NOAA funding, CDPR will generally provide the Reserve environmental education coordinator. FWS provides a public use specialist.

### **3. Cooperating Agencies**

#### **a. Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association (SWIA)**

SWIA provides non-governmental support to the interpretation and environmental education programs of the Reserve. SWIA raises funds through operation of the Cooperating Association Sales Outlet (bookstore) in the Reserve Visitor Center and a variety of other means. Part of those funds are used to enhance interpretation and environmental education programs. Requests for SWIA funding are submitted by the Reserve manager for review and approval by the SWIA Board of Directors. Many SWIA members also volunteer at the Reserve, serving as docents and educators.

#### **b. Other Cooperating Agencies**

The California Coastal Conservancy, California Coastal Commission, County of San Diego, and City of San Diego may all provide technical assistance and funding (as available) to assist the operating agencies in implementing the public use, interpretation, and education programs of the Reserve.

## **E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESEARCH AND MONITORING**

### **1. TRNERR Management Authority**

The research responsibilities of the Management Authority include reviewing Reserve Research plans to ensure they complement NOAA Strategic and Three-Year Action Plan research goals, and evaluating the overall progress toward achieving NERR System and Reserve priorities.

Most of the Research Responsibilities of the Management Authority are executed by the Research and Monitoring Committee (See Chapter 6). The Research and Monitoring Committee meets with the operating agencies to review applications to conduct research at the Reserve. Applications are accepted twice a year and are reviewed by a committee representing the Management Authority, operating agencies, and members

of the scientific community. (See Chapter 6 for details of Reserve Research Protocol.) Research on Tijuana Slough NWR must be compatible with the Refuge purpose.

The Research and Monitoring Committee also assists and advises the operating agencies in execution of NERR System-wide monitoring efforts at the Reserve.

## **2. Operating Agencies**

CDPR and FWS are responsible for approval of research that occurs on State Park and National Wildlife Refuge (including Navy lands), respectively. All research on the Reserve must be approved and authorized under a special-use permit signed by the Reserve manager or Refuge manager. CDPR and FWS will institute a joint permitting system to be used whenever practical.

The operating agencies will coordinate closely with the Research and Education Committee of the Management Authority to ensure that research conducted on the Reserve is compatible with resource protection; scientifically sound; compatible with existing public uses including interpretation, education, and existing research efforts; and whenever possible, contributory to NERR System goals. The review of research applications will be a joint exercise of the operating agencies and the Research and Education Committee. Research on Tijuana Slough NWR must be compatible with the Refuge purpose.

The operating agencies are responsible for conducting the Reserve Monitoring Program, as funded by NOAA. This may be accomplished by CDPR or FWS personnel under direction of the Reserve manager and on-site Refuge manager, or by a Reserve-administered contract with universities or other entities.

## **3. Cooperating Agencies**

### **a. Land-owning Agencies**

Land-owning agencies are ultimately responsible and have final approval over research proposed to be conducted on their lands.

### **b. California Coastal Conservancy**

The Coastal Conservancy may provide technical assistance and funding (as available) to support the Reserve Research Program.

c. San Diego State University

SDSU funds and conducts virtually all of the research at the Reserve and plays an active role on the Research and Monitoring committee. SDSU serves as a liaison with the academic community and advises the Reserve staff on resource protection and restoration. A wide range of research and monitoring, including the NERR System monitoring activities, are performed by SDSU.

**4. Affiliated Organizations**

a. Researchers

Research personnel from all sources, including universities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private citizens are all welcome to apply to conduct scientific studies at the Reserve. Researchers are responsible for following the protocol established in Chapter 6 of this Management Plan, including meeting all deadlines for applications, and permitting requirements. Failure to follow procedures or meet deadlines may result in rejection of applications.



## F. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, ACCESS, AND USE

### 1. Management Authority

The Management Authority coordinates Reserve-wide policies for public involvement, use, and access. The meetings of the Management Authority provide a forum where the public can present comments and suggestions on Reserve operations. The committees of the Management Authority are a vital link to the public; members of the public are recruited to lend their expertise to committees.

### 2. Operating Agencies

The operating agencies designate and maintain safe access to and through the Reserve. They encourage visitor use and involvement to the extent compatible with resource protection (and, where applicable, with Refuge purposes). They also staff the volunteer program, a public relations program, and coordinate with independent volunteer groups.

### 3. Cooperating Agencies

Individual agencies and organization provide recommendations and funding for improved public access. In some cases, cooperating agencies own land adjacent to the Reserve boundary and can collaborate on trail linkages and regional recreational planning.

## G. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESOURCE PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT, AND RESTORATION

### 1. Management Authority

The Management Authority coordinates land management actions of individual agencies and monitors progress on implementing the Reserve's resource protection, management, and restoration strategy. Where possible, the Management Authority assists with development, funding, and permitting of protection or restoration activities.

### 2. Operating Agencies

The Reserve manager works with the State Coastal Conservancy, state and county departments of parks and recreation, and other agencies to ensure that land acquisition activities are coordinated with and responsive to the Reserve's goals and objectives and the NERR System strategic directions.

The operating agencies manage lands to fulfill the missions of the NWR, CDPR and NERR systems. The agencies are responsible for identifying and acquiring additional lands for Tijuana Slough NWR or Border Field State Park.

### **3. Cooperating Agencies**

Cooperating agencies assist and advise the operating agencies in resource protection, management, and restoration activities. The State Coastal Conservancy plays a vital role in the resource protection, management and restoration of the Reserve. The Conservancy implements the acquisition strategy and designs and implements the restoration program.

## **H. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION OF FUNDING**

### **1. Management Authority**

The Management Authority may make recommendations to the operating agencies on the financial needs and priorities for spending at the Reserve, but has no specific financial reporting responsibilities.

### **2. Operating Agencies**

The responsibility for accurate financial tracking and reporting lies primarily with the operating agencies.

#### **a. CDPR**

The Reserve manager is responsible for accurately budgeting operation needs and sending financial statements and performance reports to State Parks headquarters and NOAA.

Many Reserve projects are supported through grants or funding from Cooperating Agencies such as NOAA, SWIA, and the State Coastal Conservancy. Grant categories have included operation and management, development, planning and construction,

acquisition, education, and research and monitoring. In order to receive each financial assistance award, quarterly or semi-annual performance and financial reports are required.

In addition to submitting financial reports, the Reserve must “draw down” on federal funds available, which requires coordination between CDPR’s field office in San Diego and CDPR’s headquarters in Sacramento.

In past years, financial management of NOAA funds at the Reserve has needed improvement. During a NOAA 312 review, completion of an updated Management Plan and implementation of financial and program reporting system were required of the Reserve staff. The actions regarding reporting were completed by February 1997 and are now part of standard practices at the Reserve.

#### b. FWS

FWS funds operations and maintenance of Tijuana Slough NWR and, within the overall Reserve, is a major federal contributor of funds and staff resources. FWS receives no funding from NOAA and has no financial management responsibilities to NOAA. Funding of the Reserve is a responsibility of the NOAA/CDPR relationship. Refuge and Reserve budgets and financial management separate and are tied only through voluntary cooperation of FWS and CDPR.

Refuge management is funded through annual congressional NWR Operations and Maintenance (O&M) appropriations. Refuge O&M funds are fund targeted and managed at the San Diego NWR complex headquarters. All funds are complex funds and are not specifically targeted to Tijuana Slough NWR. Beginning in FY98, the complex Refuge manager will sub-target funds for management to the Tijuana Slough on-site Refuge manager, but final fiscal accountability is a Refuge complex function. FWS contracting officers supporting Tijuana Slough NWR are located at the complex headquarters in Carlsbad, CA, and regional office in Portland, OR. The on-site manager is an authorized government Visa cardholder and is authorized to make most routine purchases required for day-to-day operation of the Refuge.

FWS is authorized by various legislation to make grants to, and enter cooperative agreements with, state and local government agencies, and certain educational and non-profit private organizations. These authorities provide excellent mechanisms to leverage resources within the Reserve partnership. FWS is authorized to accept contributed funds. FWS can also receive and provide funds to other federal agencies through a variety of authorized obligating mechanisms.

Refuge funding needs are identified, and appropriations justified, through the NWRS Maintenance Management System (MMS) and Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS) databases. MMS projects identify funding needs to replace, rehabilitate, or repair existing real and capitalized property. RONS projects identify additional funding and staffing requirements needed to operate the NWR at its objective level and accomplish the goals of this Comprehensive Management Plan. A list of RONS projects is located at Appendix 2.

Tijuana Slough NWR may also receive FWS fiscal resources through other appropriations. These may include funds from fire management and private lands sub-activities, and contributed funds. Again, these resources are fund targeted to the Refuge Complex and managed similar to Refuge O&M funds.

### **3. Cooperating Agencies**

When possible, Cooperating Agencies seek funding from within their agencies to fund Reserve projects. Cooperating agencies may also seek grants from outside sources to fund projects at the Reserve.

#### **I. TRNERR STAFFING**

An overview of current staffing is provided below.

**TABLE 2: Current Staffing at Tijuana River NERR\***

<b>Position</b>	<b>Perm/Temp</b>	<b>Full/Part Time</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Key Elements of Job</b>
Reserve Manager (State Parks Superintendent)	Permanent	Full-time	CDPR	Reserve Manager, Interagency Coordination
On-site Refuge Manager	Permanent	Full-time	FWS	Management of Refuge, Interagency Coordination
Resource Ecologist	Permanent	75% time	CDPR	Resource Management
State Park Ranger	Permanent	Full-time	CDPR	Law Enforcement

Education Coordinator	Permanent	Part-time	NOAA	Education Program
Public Use Specialist	Term	Full-time	FWS	Volunteer Coordinator, Media and community Outreach
Education Assistant	Temporary	Part-time	NOAA	Watershed Coordinator
Park Aid	Term	Part-time	FWS	Grounds Maintenance, interpretive talks
Park Aid	Temporary	Part-time	CDPR	Visitor Service
Park Aid	Temporary	Part-time	CDPR	Maintenance
Park Aid	Temporary	Part-time	NOAA	Artist in Residence
Wildlife Biologist	Permanent	Full-time (75% at TRNERR)	FWS	Biological program, tern monitoring, wildlife inventory
Range Technician (2) (Seasonal Fire Fighter)	Temporary	Full-time	FWS	Fire suppression and prevention
Youth Conservation Corps Coordinator	Temporary	Full-time	FWS	YCC Crew Supervision
Park Ranger	Permanent	Full-time	FWS	Law Enforcement
Park Maintenance Worker	Permanent	Full-time	CDPR	Lead Maintenance Position

\* All FWS staff are staff of San Diego NWR complex. FWS staff stationed at Tijuana Slough also have responsibilities at other refuges and staff at other NWRs regularly assist at Tijuana Slough.

**TABLE 3: Proposed Additions and Modifications to Staffing at TRNERR**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Perm/Temp</b>	<b>Full/Part Time</b>	<b>Funding Source*</b>	<b>Key Elements of Job</b>
Office Assistant	Permanent	Part-time	CDPR/	Admin. support to

			FWS (97001)	Reserve/Refuge Managers
Research Coordinator	Permanent	To be determined	NOAA/ CDPR/ SDSU	Coordinate Research Program
Park Ranger	Term	Part-time	FWS (97001)	Interpretation

Park Aid	Term	Full-time	FWS (97002)	Visitor Services
Refuge Officer	Permanent	Part-time	FWS (98001)	Law Enforcement
Biologist Technician	Temporary	Full-time	FWS (98003)	Animal Control
Maintenance Worker	Permanent	Part-time	FWS (98XXX)	Maintenance
Watershed Coordinator	Permanent	Part-time	NOAA/ CDPR	Watershed Coordination

\* Numbers in brackets refer to NWR RONS projects.

### **1. Description of Additional Staff Positions Needed**

#### **Office Assistant**

Administrative support is needed for both the Refuge and Reserve manager. The Reserve is currently without administrative support and the addition of this position would improve the Reserve performance in responding to grant proposals, permit proposals, and financial reporting. Proposed duties include clerical support and record-keeping. Either CDPR or FWS could contribute funding for this position.

#### **Research Coordinator**

Current needs for the position are identified in the Research and Monitoring section of this plan (see Chapter 6). Proposed duties would include maintaining and improving the Reserve GIS system, reviewing research applications, acting as a liaison with research institutions to promote management oriented research, improving record-keeping and documentation of historic and current research at the Reserve, and implementing the NERR System research and monitoring guidelines. Research

coordination currently falls to the Reserve and Refuge managers. Potential funding sources for this position are NOAA, CDPR, FWS, and SDSU.

#### Law Enforcement Officer

Law enforcement needs are identified in the Resource Protection, Management, and Restoration section of this plan (see Chapter 5). The FWS law-enforcement officer would patrol Tijuana Slough NWR and other refuges in the San Diego NWR Complex, direct crime prevention at the Refuge, act as a liaison for coordination with other agencies on law enforcement matters, plan public use and law enforcement programs, assist with interpretive program, and serve as the complex safety officer.

#### Watershed Coordinator

The watershed coordinator would implement the watershed plan identified in chapter 10. Currently, watershed coordination functions are performed in a limited capacity through the Education and Interpretation program. The watershed coordinator is likely to be a State Parks employee. Potential funding sources are CDPR, NOAA, cooperating agencies, and grants from state and federal sources.

#### Volunteers

In addition to regular staff, community members support the Tijuana River NERR in diverse capacities. Recruitment, orientation, and work schedules are currently coordinated by the Interpretive and Education Specialist and by staff members.

### **V. ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN OF ACTION**

**Goal 1. Maintain an administrative framework that maximizes interagency cooperation and allows the Reserve to take full advantage of funding opportunities.**

Objective 1a: Maintain and foster a mutually supportive administrative relationship between the operating agencies.

#### Task:

- Maintain cooperative management structure of the Reserve by the Refuge and Reserve managers and their staffs as detailed in the Letter of Agreement.

Objective 1b: Ensure adequate staffing to accomplish the mission, goals and objectives of the Reserve.

Tasks:

- Acquire funding for additional staff positions through funding agencies or grants.
- Improve staffing by expanding the volunteer program.

Objective 1c: Maintain and foster a positive, mutually rewarding relationship with NOAA's NERR System.

Objective 1d: Fulfill the mission and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

**Goal 2. Establish and maintain an effective administrative structure that provides clear policy direction and guidance in the management of the Reserve.**

Objective 2a: Maintain the role of the Management Authority as an advisory and policy-coordinating body that promotes cooperation between the 12-member agencies.

Objective 2b: Increase the level of decision-making done at the committee level, where opportunity for public involvement is greater.

Objective 2c: The Management Authority should annually establish Reserve priorities to ensure successful implementation of the Management Plan.

**Goal 3: Coordinate and cooperate with federal, state, and local partners to manage a seamless Reserve that addresses watershed and ecosystem-level concerns while meeting the established purpose of the NWR.**